

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1 to 7, 9 to 12 and 14 to 16 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and add new Claims 17 to 36 as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. to 16. (Canceled)

17. (New) A method of authorizing access to medical image data generated by one or more imaging facilities, comprising the steps of;

receiving digital medical image data generated by the one or more imaging facilities via a network at a server;

storing the digital medical image data at the server;

providing an authorized user with access to at least a part of the stored digital image data via an authorization process on the network;

enabling the authorized user to select digital image data from among the stored image data to which the authorized user has access, and

enabling the authorized user to grant an individual other than the authorized user rights to access the selected image data.

18. (New) The method according to Claim 17, further comprising a step of notifying the other individual by an email that a right to access the selected digital image data via an internet browser has been granted.

19. (New) The method according to Claim 17, wherein the server is remote from the one or more imaging facilities and from the authorized user.

20. (New) The method according to Claim 17, further comprising a step of determining if the digital image data received from the one or more imaging facilities is associated with the authorized user,

wherein only digital medical image data determined to be associated with the authorized user is transmitted to the server and stored at the server.

21. (New) The method according to Claim 17, wherein the digital medical image data is transmitted from a gateway of the imaging facilities to the server using an authenticated session over a secure protocol, and wherein the digital medical image data is stored at the server in the same format as it was received from the gateway.

22. (New) The method according to Claim 21, wherein the digital medical image data is received from the gateway using DICOM protocol.

23. (New) The method according to Claim 17, further comprising steps of:
receiving one or more reports corresponding to the digital medical image data generated by the one or more imaging facilities and stored at the server; and
storing the one or more reports at the server,
wherein the authorized user is provided access to the one or more reports via the network.

24. (New) The method according to Claim 23, wherein the report is encrypted and transmitted to the server via the network using an authenticated and secure communication session.

25. (New) The method according to Claim 23, further comprising a step of providing an interface for the authorized user to grant to the other individual a right to access the stored digital medical image data and the corresponding report(s).

26. (New) The method according to Claim 23, further comprising a step of recording access to the stored digital medical image data and corresponding reports, wherein access records for digital medical image data and corresponding reports associated with a payer are provided to the authorized user via the network .

27. (New) The method according to Claim 17, wherein the other individual is granted a right to access the digital medical image data for a limited time.

28. (New) The method according to Claim 17, wherein there are limitations on the power of the authorized user to grant rights to access the image data to other individuals.

29. (New) The method, according to Claim 17, further comprising steps of: receiving an upload of one or more radiology reports corresponding to at least one of the stored digital medical image data;

linking the uploaded radiology report(s) to a matching stored digital medical image data, so as to form a study comprised of stored digital medical image data and an associated radiology report; and

receiving demographic data associated with the study, including information on the associated facilities, physicians and payers;

wherein the authorized user is provided with access to the study and associated demographic data in the providing step, and wherein the authorized user is enabled to grant the other individual the right to access the selected study and associated demographic data.

30. (New) A server system for authorizing access to medical image data generated by one or more imaging facilities, comprising:

a receiving unit configured to receive digital medical image data generated by the one or more imaging facilities via a network;

a storage unit configured to store the digital medical image data;

an authorizing unit configured to provide an authorized user with access to at least a part of the stored digital image data via an authorization process on the network;

a first enabling unit configured to enable the authorized user to select digital image data from among the stored image data to which the authorized user has access; and

a second enabling unit configured to enable the authorized user to grant an individual other than the authorized user rights to access the selected image data.

31. (New) The system according to Claim 30, further comprising a notifying unit configured to notify the other individual by an email that a right to access the selected digital image data via an internet browser has been granted.

32. (New) The system according to Claim 30, further comprising a determination unit configured to determine whether or not the digital image data received from the imaging facilities is associated with the authorized user,

wherein only digital medical image data determined to be associated with the authorized user is received by the receiving unit and stored by the storage unit.

33. (New) The system according to Claim 30, wherein the receiving unit receives the digital medical image data from a gateway of the one or more imaging facilities using an authenticated session over a secure protocol, and wherein the storage unit stores the digital medical image data in the same format as it was received from the gateway.

34. (New) The system according to Claim 30, wherein the other individual is granted a right to access the digital medical image data for a limited time.

35. (New) The method according to Claim 30, wherein there are limitations on the power of the authorized user to grant a right to access the data to other individuals.

36. The system according to Claim 30, further comprising;

an unit configured to receive an upload of one or more radiology reports corresponding to at least one of the stored digital medical image data;

a linking unit configured to link the uploaded radiology report(s) to a matching stored digital medical image data, so as to form a study comprised of stored digital medical image data and an associated radiology report(s); and

an unit configured to receive demographic data associated with the study, including information on an associated one or more imaging facilities, physicians and payers,

wherein the authorized user is provided with access to the study and associated demographic data by the authorizing unit, and wherein the authorized user is enabled by the first and second enabling units to grant the other individual the right to access the selected study and associated demographic data.